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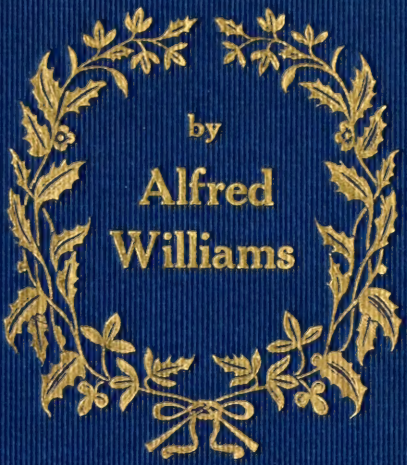
Nature and Other Poems



To Reuben.

with the author's kindest thoughts
and sincerest wishes
Alfred Williams
11-Oct 1912

NATURE AND OTHER POEMS

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NATURE
AND OTHER POEMS

By
ALFRED WILLIAMS
Author of
"Songs in Wiltshire," "Poems in Wiltshire," etc.

LONDON
ERSKINE MACDONALD
17, SURREY STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1912

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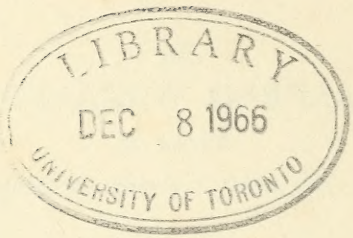

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To

THE HONOURABLE MRS. HERBERT AGAR

OF STANTON HOUSE, HIGHWORTH,

IN RECOGNITION OF A GRACEFUL AND SPONTANEOUS ACT OF KINDNESS TO THE AUTHOR.

"Pour que son vers clément pardonne au genre humain,
Que faut-il au poète? Un baiser et du pain."

Moreau.

Look not herein any who would delight
In tricks of fancy, and unnatural thought,
Strained types and similes, rags and tatters, brought
From distant nowhere to confound the sight,—
Those crooked shapes, descending from the height
Of unsubstantial space, or deeply sought
In caverns, with much fearful labour wrought;
Not in such torments would I choose to write:
But, were I master, I would pay good heed
First, to be straight and simple, not too bold,
Too over-florid, fond of tinsel-gold,
But strong in substance, native to the deed,
Where the most stubborn wit could plainly read,
Like those clear-voiced immortal bards of old.

ALFRED WILLIAMS

DRYDEN COTTAGE
SOUTH MARSTON
WILTSHIRE
September, 1912

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THE HILLS

I

O GLIMMERING landscape of hills, slow-curving and winding,
For ever beginning, and ending, and losing, and finding,
Chiselled, and graven, and wrought to a virginal feature
With the mind, and the scope, and the pen of all-passionate nature;
Beautiful-braided, unbrokenly simple and free,
With the inshore green and terminal blue of the sea;
Wave upon quivering wave, intense with the sun and the wind,
Full as the ocean before and vast as the valley behind;
Emblem of purity, strength, all-virtuous pride,
Keen with the breath of the shore, and strong with the salt of the tide;
Fair as the face of a maid, and doubly tender and dear
Than the wistful soul of a child, or a falling, ineffable tear;
O dear to my passionate soul! what labours remain to be done,
What fights to be fought, what deaths, ere our spirits re-mingle and run
As the pure, sweet, sorrowful wave from the sheltering valleys that be
Is clasped, entwined, and entrained in the merciful arms of the sea?
How long shall the prisoner call, the suppliant wait
The consummate kindness of death, the ultimate wisdom of fate?

II

Beautiful hills, blue-bordered with valleys and plains,
Rich with the soul of the sun, and fresh with the dew
of the rains,
A fair and immaculate field, embosomed and jewelled
with studs
Of inland islands of trees, and blossoming beauty of
woods;
Clothed with the delicate woof of sapphire, ruby, and
pearl,
Smooth as the moulded shape and marble limbs of a
girl;
O temple and shrine of my heart, the silent recesses,
Where thought, like a trembling infant, its secret
confesses,
Wooed by the passionate calm of the innermost soul
of the glade,
Far from the harrowing haunts of men, and the waters
of trade,
I breathe in your clustering cells of the uttermost
breath
Of a sure and infallible world, beyond the river of
Death.
And a tear steals down from mine eye and waters a
space on the sod,
And I rise from the region of man, and soar to the
borders of God,
And the fetters fall from my limbs, and the star of my
soul shines free
With the clarified hope of the past, and the mightier
future to be;
And I know in my heart, for I learned of the wind
and the sun,
That the hills, and the woods, and the skies, and my
soul will be one.

III

O quiet, contemplative hills, you mystical sages,
Ripe with the wisdom of years, and the teaching of ages,
Marvel ye not that I pine for the thought ye are thinking,
And thirst in my soul for the passionate draught ye are drinking,
Poured from the bowl of the sun, that the June-day long doth shine
Over your knitted brows, with the stealing wrath of the vine?
How I sigh for the knowledge that's hid in the hold of your heart,
While the year draws mightily round, and one after another depart
The faded blossoms of hope and broken threads of desire,
Yet living, re-raised and re-kindled with the sun's unquenchable fire?
Can I think that ye know not the secret of all that appears,
Of the storms, and the floods, and the multitudinous years,
The climates, and seasons, and revolutions of change,
How ye pondered and thought in your souls, and counted it strange,
And writ in your innermost books, and brooded early and late
On the manifold wisdom of Time, and the wonderful folly of Fate?
Ye know, ye know. I have heard you, loud and clear as a bell,
I have learned from the breath of your lips, and learned it truly and well,

As bosom to bosom we lingered, heart over heart to
divine,
And I mingled my spirit with yours, and ye mingled
yours with mine;
And ye sware with an adamant oath, and confessed
with the sun,
That the seasons, and ultimate years, and my soul
should be one.

IV

I have come, O you hills! with the tremulous heart
of a fawn,
Quivering with passionate fear, in the grey-winged
hours of the dawn,
Ere the high, adorable East has unveiled, and unfurled
Her broad blue ensign above the boundless tracts of
the world;
I have come at your call, and fear lent wings to my
feet,
With a cry in my soul, and the drum of my heart
a-beat,
And the streaming blood of the sweat slid down from
my brow,
As I clambered and came from the slumbering valley
below;
I flew like a flame, or an arrow that's shot in the wind,
With the glimmer of truth before, and the shadow of
falsehood behind;
And the walls of the silver mist stood ever beside me,
And the flickering fire of the stars would never abide me,
So I flew with a hurrying haste until I had found you,
And threw, with the frenzy of fear, my wild arms
around you,
And married the throb of my ear to the beat of your
breast,
And strained with the strength of the East, and the
nerves of the West—

Eternity sat on the heights, and out of the Vast a breath
Stiller than Silence breathed, or the azure Angel of Death—
So I caught that ye called me to hear, my beloved. 'Tis done!
Now earth has confessed, and I know that the hills and my soul will be one.

V

Tell me, you wandering winds and passionate breezes that blow
Fresh from the concave shores of the globéd ocean below,
From the far-off wave-serrate rim, and terminal blue of the main,
Out of the clarified crystal of space, and the quivering plain
Of the clear, ulterior, medial, marginal blue;
You hoary, harvesting hinds, replete with the rain and the dew;
Tell me, you airy-winged, featureless visions that blow—
For I know in the chambering cell of my heart that ye know—
From what far-off, reverend fount are these streams that arise
And flood, with unquenchable tears, to the gates of my eyes?
This deeper, inconsequent, reasonless knowledge that creeps
Out of the innermost gulf of my soul's unfathoming deeps?
Thoughts and half-thoughts, like dreams, too vastly fragile and fine
For reason's harrowing yoke, or the swerving, wavering line

Of the fleshly feeling of words, that clothe but the forms
that have been,
And pall at the inward sense of the more than the vast
unseen;
Come they not volleying forth, apart from the logical
plan,
Less than the wisdom of God, and more than the reason
of man?
Beautiful dreams, that faint for a far realising,
Yet ever, for ever, arising, arising, arising;
Near to the star of a thought, or bodying form of a
word,
Shy as the rosy lips of a maid, or startled beautiful
bird,
Trembling with delicate promise of "Yes," in hope to
be given,
Or beating with slender and aureate wings at the dome
of the heaven;
Ever and soon to be faltered and heard, the word to be
spoken,
And ever the magical vision beyond, the spell to be
broken!
O could I mightily grasp the symbol of knowledge that
lies
In the hidden hold of my heart, and tame the thoughts
that arise
To a sober, sane confession of truth within truth,
And draw the delirious breath of the fire of my youth,
I know, in that passionate hour, my flickering torch
must fail
Below the glimmering hint of a light, and pass, through
the veil,
Back to the august Giver that gave, that life would be
done,
And reason and silence of thought and my soul should
be one.

VI

O human heart of the hills! how comes my heart to be drawn
Out of captivity, sleep, ere the pure-winged angel of dawn
Kindles the luminous lamp of the East, and a blush is confessed
By the smoothly slumbering limbs and rounded form of the West,
To pace your shimmering heights alone, with the stole
Of the star-beams over my head, and a dateless fear in my soul?
All night, through the valley of sleep, I walk in my dreams
By musical margins of woods and soul-embodying streams,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the pitiless stroke
Of bruising, burdensome Time, and the strength of the oak
Is the inward strength of my heart, and fear and anxiety rest
With folded symbols of peace, like a bird on the nest;
And the scented violet breathes with an innocent breath,
And the soul of the wind is as still as the soul of death;
But O when the East is near to awaking, there comes
A knock at the gate of my heart, and the clatter of drums
Shivers my soul to its base, and a still, unbearable pain
Steals from the shrine of my heart to the cell of my brain,
And I rise with a withering cry, like one of a uniform host
Waking to find he has wandered behind in the paths of the lost,
And I flee like a prisoner forth, with a cry begun
That the woods and the manifold hills and my soul shall be one.

VII

O tender, compassionate hills! I am weary of life, I am dead,
For the earth rocks under my feet, and the clouds break over my head;
I am slain, I am stunned with the fall, as a stone that is hurled,
And I flee from the faces of men, and hide from the glare of the world;
And I wait for the measureless promise Eternity gave,
For the calm, sweet ruling of Death, and the peace of the grave;
And I look in the glass of my heart, and hourly abide you,
In the long, low evergreen valley that stretches beside you.
For what is the mete and the mark? Lo! how humanity frowns!
Lo! how my quivering pulses beat at the thought of the towns!
Lo! how the toiler toils, and the voice of the mourner mourns,
And the proud pass pitiless by, and the heart of the scorner scorns,
And deadly complex quarrels and withering hate
Sit in the innermost hearts of men, and cunningly wait
To crush Eternity down to the last abyss,
And rob the conquering soul of the merit of bliss.
O never shall the flattering cheer of the crowd, the chink of the gold,
The pride of station and wealth be glittering fetters to hold
The scathless soul of the seer from the beauty that fills
The far, sweet visage of space, and the heart of the hills;
But ever while journeying wheels revolve in the race to be run,
So shall the pulse of my heart beat true to the hills and the sun.

VIII

Flow, endless rivers of thoughts and imaginings, flow!
And blow, you ministering, murmuring breaths of the breezes, blow!
Over the ultimate hills and marginal blue of the plain,
Bending the passionate, reasoning blooms, and the stalks of the grain,
Sifting the innermost soul of the woods, and thoughts of the leaves,
Looping and twining your manifold arms round the gold of the sheaves,
Blow softly, faintly, strongly out of the sea,
And blow the healing breath of the hills in the valley to me.
I know, somewhere in my heart, that a thousand enemies wait
To rend my quivering soul, but I fear not invisible fate,
Rapt with the calm, cool, sensible breath that distils
The clarified, purified, sisterly soul of the hills.
How far soever the rending crown of the world,
Fired with the uttermost doom of the sun, shall be hurled,
As ivy to the oak, moss to a stone, thorn to the bough,
Rivers to sounding seas, the tide to the deep doth flow,
The young lamb to his mother, the clinging babe to the breast,
The bee to the gilded opening flower, and the sun to the west,
So, you adorable hills, while the star of my soul shall shine
Clear through the fleshly gate of my eyes, with the strength of the vine,
Ever will I cling to you, lovingly, hopefully, till Life's sands being run,
We sleep together, O my soul, and you hills, for ever and ever one.

THE TESTAMENT

I

COME, you oak trees and hazels, you old-fashioned elms and beeches,
You shrunk and shaded pool, with the willows and the maples,
The loving boughs and branches and the hawthorn still beside it,
With the sweetened scent of summer, breathing gentle and delicious,
Let us gather all together where no other eye can see us,
In the densely crowded shadow, with the heifer and the yearling,
Twine our arms and sit together with the music all around us,
And listen to the murmurs of the distant world beyond us.
You know I could not tarry long without you, I am tired of streets and faces,
When I walk between the high walls with the crowd pushing at my elbow,
The old and young and middle-aged, laughing and talking together,
That seem to be in love with their prison, almost enraptured with it;
Or see them walking up and down, now pausing to gaze in a window,
Now standing in several groups, solemnly conversing and discussing
The last phase of the moon, or something or other of a scandal,
Or trooping from the theatre and hall, or the room political,
Flushed with extreme success, or pale with disappointment,

Observing the powdered features of the dames, with the florid ornament,
And the studied appearance of the males, the youths and the gentlemen,
The gross ring on the finger, the hair most carefully brushed and divided,
And that high and haughty look, as good as " I am the emperor,"
Then my heart grows dead within me, my spirits droop, I despair of myself,
I long to escape to the little wooded glen, or field with the cattle grazing,
Or hide myself in the old forked willow over the stream,
Or else throw my arms round the trunk of a spreading oak-tree,
Or stand concealed in the hazels, and listen to the birds in the roof overhead,
Or peer into the rounded nest with the sky-blue eggs, and black spots upon them,
Or wander up and down the cornfield with the green waves rippling,
The skylark singing in the clouds above, and the pale-blue butterflies,
The ground ivy under my feet, and the pink and white convolvulus.
Or, failing this, if I am not too tired and over-weary,
Too beaten and distressed with circumstance, with the day's adventure,
My soul cries for the long sloping hill, perched above the valley,
The delicate curving hill, the old ancient inheritance,
The loving sisterly hill, the purifying hill, the windswept tabernacle,
With the carved and runic feature of the rampart and the gully,
The gold glamour of thorn-broom, the dwarfed and stunted heather,
And that delicious life-giving breath, blowing continually,

Strong with immortality—I can perceive it in my nostrils,
I know every time I inhale it, and constantly affirm it to myself,
That having once drunk the elixir, the draught electrical,
It is useless for Death to lay his frigid cold hand upon me—
So, coming back to you once more—as a sailor from sea returning—
Make haste to welcome me all with your loving, fond caresses,
While I sit in the shelter of you here, and warble out a melody.

II

There is nothing very delectable in that I would sing to you,
You have heard it all before, there is no need to name you anything,
Other lips before mine have sung, you have had your mouthpieces,
You are yourselves the song, I am no more than an instrument.
Lo! a chord is struck within me, I echo forth, the note expands, reiterates,
Again I become silent, the string of life is broken, mutilate.
I pass to the great majority, or I am cast aside like a vestment.
Fools! I laugh in your faces, I pour out my ridicule upon you,
Thinking to be so lightly quit of me, or of yourselves, I will cling to you;
I yield my corporal body back to earth, but the song continues.
You know the cruelty and unkindness of men, you will not forget it,

How they scorned the breath of my mouth, and very nearly laid hands upon me,
How they hated one of your children—and one of theirs —and stepped aside quickly,
Now covertly waiting in the distance, taking slow note of my footsteps,
Now using all manner of complaints, and worthless poor objections,
Rejoicing to see me pierced and bruised with sorrows, and stung with reproaches.
I do not blame them for it, it is not theirs, they are the sufferers;
I am too strong for envy, I know myself that I am not impotent.
I can bear my burden cheerfully, and smile under it, I do not exalt myself.
I have no desire of riches, nor of honour, I enjoy all naturally;
I am the heir of all that I see, that is my possession;
And the things that are invisible and eternal are mine also.
I can count the wind in particles, I can reason with it from the hill-top,
The clouds of sweetness arising from the earth and the flowers, the scents, and odours,
And catch the streaming flood of song poured from a thrush's throat or a skylark's—
How broadly it is carried out! How it shoots and thrills and penetrates!
How it winds and undulates, and ripples up and down in waves and filaments!
All this I embody in my song, I have learned it of my parent.
I have had no school but my own thoughts, no other pedagogue,
But several books for my tutors, my own staff to lean upon.
I am not anxious to please any, nor yet desirous of offending any;

I can kneel with humanity, or soar with them, I am not above them.
I am bound by no rule of flesh and blood, no covenants and compacts;
Treaties are no more in my eyes than the written bonds of disagreement.
If I have wronged any man I am sorry for it, I no more apologise;
If there is any satisfaction arising from it, it is due to myself;
The pain of punishment is greater in me than in him I have injured;
There is no hell greater than that of a guilty conscience.

III

It is good to be with you at all times, not in spring or summer only;
To sit in the shelter of you and hear your song, that is my condition.
To me all times and seasons are alike, if there is any difference, it is in myself;
One moon is as good as another to me, and May no more beautiful than December.
Age was not always old; December had a husband once;
Nothing is stable long, and May will one day be a widow.
One praises Spring. That is natural. It is the season of hope, adorable.
I myself am in love with it. I am happy with the green earth and the flowers arising,
The slant rays of the sun, the sweetness and the song, the young lambs bleating.
I could sit all day, and all night in the stars, I am never weary of it.
This, more passionate, awaits the time of June and the roses,

A foretaste is not enough, he must deeply revel in it,
He must know the rich grass up to his knees, all things a-ripening;
The corn yellowing in the valley, or on the hill, the trees laden with fruit,
The little stream very nearly dried up, the earth tormented,
The day drawn out to the uttermost, the night abridged, almost annihilated.
All this I fully appreciate, it is mine as well as his, I am drunk with the exuberance of it,
I am happy with a little, or I can admire much; I do not covet anything.
Another, more riotous and intense, smacks his lips at Autumn;
For him the purple vintage, the golden corn, and the olives,
The thresher at his work, the wains plying and returning,
The long ladder trailing in the orchard, or the pear tree by the chimney,
The golden russets here, the queen pippin, or the seedling,
The late plum waiting to be delivered, the bullace and the damsons,
The brown cobs, and the hazels, the chestnuts, and the filberts,
The hedges groaning under their weight, each ready with an offering,
Earth with her crowded arms, and none able to receive it.
I grant every man his right and his pleasure, I am not niggardly.
Let him be satisfied; for that is the aim of all life, and a great part happiness.
I am temperate in all things, and at all times, I praise none excessively;
For me the shadow and cloud are no less than the sunlight;
They have their uses and equivalents; I am no judge, I submit myself.

All delights meet and blend in me, all climates, conditions;
I drink my fill of them all, and rejoice that I am not another.
The grey twilight pleases me, the intense noon, or the still evening;
I praise the birth, and the death, the end, and the beginning.
I am at one with them all, I am raging as well as peaceful;
I can be calm or perturbed, I follow Nature in all things; I was born natural,
I can enjoy a tempest, I love to hear the wind howling.
I can hear myself in it, as soon as it arrives, I go forth, expedient,
I stand on the hill, or under the oaks. How it roars, precipitates!
I turn my face to it and draw deep breaths, I open my arms, I embrace—myself!
Higher and higher I raise my head; now the rain sweeps in torrents deliciously,
Full on my forehead it beats and runs down, there is more than sweetness in it.
I leave the shelter of the oaks, I go forward. Now the clouds come down.
The hills are hid with a coverlet, and the valley also, I am very nearly hid myself,
I pass the yearlings, and the heifer great with calf, they look up at me;
I pause and comfort them, now they advance, they put out their nostrils inquiringly;
I can feel the dew of their breath; now they touch my hand; I pass on.
Here are no cutting words, all kindness; still the wind increases.
This is no mortal feeling; I do not fear now; my faith grows; I defy everything.
Here is another oak, not so large. Again I pause. I put an arm around it.

Yonder is the wood. Crash the wind takes it. I feel myself lifted up.
Was ever music like it? Ever the sea, so lofty, majestical?
Now, greater than myself, I draw near to the wood, I crouch very low, I enter in.
Within, all is dark. I become entangled; still the rain beats heavily.
I am wet with the moisture. I look up, there is no heaven visible,
Only the wildly tossing boughs, the loud orchestra, and the anthem pealing.
The earth trembles, and the air trembles. My heart leaps. I cry out aloud.
Now cautious I thread my way to the light, the battle still proceeding.
Now I emerge again, I stand upright, this time delivered.
The oaks rain their acorns upon me, I gather some up and depart.
Now the storm weakens, and the wind. It is enough. I am strengthened with it.
Now I go on my way, and grow back to life, leaving the tempest behind me.

IV

O dear-loving trees, my comrades, artistic and natural!
Now I feel my soul again gushing up like a river to come to you,
And a strange longing comes over my flesh, I feel mighty and strong,
I could press you for ever in my arms, like lovers in ecstasy,
And pour out the kisses like wine from my lips, overwhelm you with kindness,
I could make you my habitation and my temple, my very sweet dwelling,
I could sleep in the chamber of your leaves deliciously,

And wake to the music of them in the dew of the twilight;
I could dispense with all raiment and food, I could break my fast with you,
We could grow together in unity and love, and no friend should sever us;
I would talk with you in your own tongue, and you respond to me in the same,
We would scatter our affections equally on all around us;
Together we could see the old sun rise, and lift up our arms to him,
We could take his kindness to us and wave our leaves in his honour,
And give him a departing sign in the evening, when the dew arises;
The loving cattle would come to us in the long noon, and lie down gently,
Or stand crowded together, rejoicing to be so well consorted;
The wandering rook and the jay would seek us for embraces,
Above, the fond skylark would pour out his love upon us,
And that loud-warbling blackbird pursue us with his melody.
We should be deeply sated with song, yet never weary of it,
Always hungering for the same food, and always satisfied with it,
The same passions and feelings, the same hopes and fulfilments,
The same inward love and sympathy for men and things, prayers and devotions,
All the books of the earth lying wide open at our feet,
Full of divine pictures of beautiful things created;
Woven sweetness of flowers, precious jewels for possession,

Most careful and cunning patterns of silks, and royal rich embroidery;
All shades and figures, all hues and dyes, pleasing to the eyesight,
And everything living, nothing without a soul and spirit in it,
Every page stamped with the perfect image of ourselves,
Wearing also the person of the Creator, his index and character;
Or, if we desire knowledge of a greater skill and compass,
There are the heavens to be looked at, like a written scroll over us,
Full of old signs and characters of letters and languages,
From the beginning eternal, and to the end eternal;
We could watch the evening star come up out of the valley,
Or that round orb of the moon, full of tears and penitence,
Rising like a city, and slow-stealing in the element;
Together we could rejoice in the delirious draughts of sunshine,
Or deeply drink in the perennial sweetness of showers and dews assembling;
The old wind would ruffle us, we would toy with him provokingly,
We would shed our round fruits one by one tenderly in Autumn,
And shake our leaves over them for a bed and a covering;
The timid conies would come to us, the speckled thrush would come to us,
The young boys looking for berries and fruits would smile at us cheerfully,
The old mare with the young foal would visit us with kindness,
And the green ivy cling to us frantically all the year through together;

The glittering hoar-frost would bestrew us with diamonds,
And the white snow wind itself round us in wreaths and mantles like wool;
We would sleep in the long nights, profoundly through the darkness,
And afterwards wake with a passion greater than all words, more devoted than ever,
That neither death, nor periods of time, nor eternity itself
Could ever rive or separate in us, so dearly we would love, and so truly.

V

Now for a moment I leave you, here I desert you utterly.
I have already drunk you up. I am full to the brim. I am become riotous.
The stream of love overflows, the flood is in my soul, I tremble all over.
I stretch out an arm, I put a foot forward, I am lost, bewildered.
I feel myself all over down to the feet, but I am not in it.
The flesh is revealed, heated and passionate, that is not what I want.
It is myself I am looking for. Where is the small uniformity?
Where is the little divine something, that sure, pent-up image of myself?
Where is the beginning and end, the present and future of me?
The little, bright light ever burning continually?
Again I ask, with love and fear increasing, and put my whole soul in it;
Stand near to me, and answer if you can; tell we what and where I am.
Round and round I walk, this way and that, up and down fearfully.

Now I run for happiness. I skim over the green turf, now I end abruptly.
I see one pale star in the blue arising, but that is not myself.
Now I come to a pool. I bend over cautiously. I see a reflection in it ;
That is my familiar, and I welcome it, but that is not myself.
Now I stoop to the ground, now I go forward again, I am discovered ;
I am unseen still, I stand aside, the leaves and branches cover me.
Now the light breaks. Suddenly I cry out. I have solved the mystery.
I have found out what was lost, it was hidden all the time, and I never knew it.
I am that little something. *I* am the ingraven image, *I am myself.*
Now I go forward hopefully. I will tell the whole world of it.
Nature shall hear it, and man also. I will shout it triumphantly till my death.
I will remember my strength and my weakness, and tell myself very often what I am.
I will be true to myself henceforth, and for ever eternally.

VI

O earth! O paradise! O flesh and blood! O quivering mortality !
O green-robed children of a parent full-begotten !
So loving and sisterly, so pure and passionate, overwhelming with desire of me,
Featured like myself, contemplative also, unsolicitous,
Lovers of solitude, yet not wholly retiring, giving and receiving,
Pushing your thoughts in blades and leaves, in lines and sentences,

Concealing in your hearts the written record of many seasons,
But chiefly the kindlers and augmentors of my flame and spirit,
O I will not be long absent from you, I will return speedily,
I will fly in my love and my fear, I will rush upon you,
I will run breathlessly up the hill to you, I will call to you in the distance,
I will wave my hand to you, and you will wave your boughs back to me,
I will smile at you from afar, I shall cry out with joy, you will hear it and answer,
You will catch the breath of my lips, and clap your leaves together;
O joy insupportable! O rapture beyond words! O ecstasy!
The virtue of reward, the toil forgotten, and the heaviness.
I render account to humanity, I could not wholly abide with them.
My heart would very soon be withered, and my soul also, I should be quite dried up.
I should fade in their presence, I should droop like leaves, I should fall to the earth,
I should lie scattered and dead, I should pine away in the solitude of numbers,
I should be starved with plenty, I should be sick with fulfilment,
I should cry out secretly, I should long to run and hide myself,
I should think of all that is past, of my own tears, and the future yet to come,
Of my youth and childhood, my age and my infancy;
I should look out with large full eyes, and turn them inwardly on myself;
There is no peace in life, it is not joy to be comfortable;
And to be satisfied with anything is worse than all diseases and deaths.

I myself will not rest, I will not lie down meekly.
I will arise like a giant, and shake myself; I will proudly lift up my head.
I will swear an oath to myself, and call all things in earth to my witness,
Never to rest while my heart beats on this side death, never to be humbled.
I will excel in my labour, I will leave nothing unfinished,
I will understand myself before I die, and this round frame, I will search deeply.
I will chisel my name—how small soever—in the rock, I do not fear greatness;
I can look into it, and above it if I will, there is nothing greater than life.
I will prove to them all, and pour out the fire of my contradiction,
I will return them the lie, and mountains of reproaches with it.
Beauty is not dead. Why! Earth is more adorable than ever.
Now is the time to be natural; the old Parent calls, everything is in readiness.
The flowers bloom, and the woods ring; the hills are green with verdure, the balm arises,
The milk flows, the honey is gathered, the small wind blows languidly,
The bees are flitting, and the butterflies, the sky is blue overhead,
The old star is genial, the air invites, there is dew in the distance,
The little stream murmurs under the arch, the corn waves in the valley,
The scythe is in the grass, the old labourer rests in the shadow,
The young colts rear playfully, the mother with her calf lies down gently,
The swain whistles, the team moves lazily. O the joy and beauty of it!

It is time to come forth. O, leave your cells and your cloisters;
Leave your painted prisons, your hovels of wood and masonry;
Leave your streets and pavilions, your dark dens and caverns,
Your homes and workshops, the noise of wheels and machinery;
Throw down the idols of debate! Put all care through the window.
What is the use of bubble and excitement, you have parleyed too long already.
The sun rises and sets, the moon wanes and increases, the stars come out.
What is amiss must be sought nearer. Look in your own hearts. Nature is natural.

VII

O my beloved! I fear my cry is not heard. Let it not be made in vain.
Let not the little thread of song become abortive in me.
Let it go forth bravely, winding and undulating.
Let it come to fit ears, let it obtain sympathy.
There is no sweetness in it. It is not very acceptable.
I have heard richer sounds, I have looked in pools deeper with thought.
I have seen art so transfigured there was no art perceptible in it.
I have seen many shrines and temples, far greater than my own; that is not my fault.
I have seen glorious toils of heroes and kings assembled.
I have seen murders and crimes, storms, and treasons committed.
I have been present at battles; I have seen the death of empires.
I have seen the sea red with blood, and ships in the deep descending.

I have seen the smoke of cities going up, and the chains
of the vanquished.
I have marched through deserts and over mountains, I
have heard the trumpet pealing.
I have known the steady tramp of feet, and the loud
drums, with the cymbals;
All this immortalized in song; my own is very poor
beside it.
Let it go forth the same, it is all sincerity.
It may meet some soul on its way, or come to earth
finally.
All is not so changed, some few are translated.
There are the loiterers still, the steady procession,
The pillars of Opinion, the approved minority.
These are the kindred spirits, the salt of the earth, the
dear rewarded.
Let my song come to them, let it fall on their ears faintly
like an echo;
Let the wind drift it slowly like a cloud, let the waves of
time bear it up;
Or let it not be heard at all, let it die down within me;
Let it be slowly strangled, let my soul be composed, and
I at rest with it.
I have tried to be silent; I have sealed my lips; I have
sworn secrecy;
I have given up all hope of myself, and walked in
strange places:
But my heart opened higher than my lips, I could not
contain the impulse;
I will go on till my death; I will follow and continue.
I have drawn a strange breath, I have smelt life with
my nostrils,
I have imbibed secrets, I have drunk at the well of
mystery;
I have seen Beauty playing with her sisters under the
trees in the meadows,
And naked Love, purer than a lily, bathing in the
sunlight.

I have played with Echo in the woods, I have dealt in herbs and simples;
I know where the East gathered her blush, and the West her brightness.
I know the breath of the South, why it is balmy, and sweet, and odourous;
And why the North is dreary and bleak, full of powders and crystals.
I know where the spring of Hope gushes out, and the fountain of song arises,
There will I stoop with the cup of my lips, I will drink it up purely;
I will live in the world of my thought, in the palace of my imagination;
I will sing my song triumphantly, whether the world heed it or not, there is duty in it.
I will finish the race; I will work my task. Be strong, O my soul, for another

VIII

Let everything living bear its own fruit openly, and conceal nothing.
Let the young grass grow in the field; let the green wheat wave in the valley or on the hill-top.
Let the wild primose bloom profusely under the willows and hazels;
Give space to the sweet violet, let her shame the woods with humility;
Let her revel in her own soul; soil not the temple of her virginity.
Let the blackthorn bloom in a cloud when the first of Spring arises;
Gather the starry daisies, and the dear, sweet buttercups;
Tenderly with the cowslips, they have braved the battle of winter, hail them victorious;
Love the woods for blue-bells, treasure them for anemones;

Let the hyacinths deck the valley, let them follow on the daffodils.
Let the young sorrel spread its juicy sweet leaves, and the cuckoo-flowers.
Let the budding hawthorn bloom, let it veil the bush with drapery;
And let the air around be heavy with perfume, thick with the odours of it.
Let the rosy wild apple-blossom soar in towers and pyramids,
And the snowy-sweet alder, heavy and rich, gather on the bough in clusters.
Welcome the dewy clover, and the purple pea. Love the delicate bean, drink her in deeply.
O the bewildering soul of the bean, the divine sweet fragrance, the breathing beauty of it!
Cherish the tender buds of the wild briar, watch the transformation;
Let them open and bloom, let them burst their cells, let them come forth beautifully;
Let them swell and expand, and breathe their immaculate souls out purely;
Let them fill heaven and earth with sweetness like a song, like a cloud arising;
Let the tender wood-lilies bloom, pale and demure, like beautiful young maidens;
And the trailing honeysuckle hang richly overhead in bowers and arbours.
Let the wild strawberry run, let her follow her imagination,
Let her drape the bank, or base of the towered tree, blooming deliciously,
Bearing her rich ripe berries profusely in the autumn;
Or let the centuried oak display her strength in leaves and acorns;
Or the lofty elm arise to the clouds, pillared and majestic;
Or the sturdy, depending beech stoop gracefully to the brim of the pool, or the meadow;

Or the tall and stately ash raise her arms lightly to the heavens;
Or the fruitful walnut spread the treasury of her leaves with dews and essences;
Or the thick walls of chestnut prepare their gifts of glooms and shadows.
Let the rich harbour his wealth, let the fool covet his inheritance;
Give skill to the artist, let him be big with execution;
To judges dignity and sense; to ambassadors secrecy;
To the trained musician scores of sounds and symphonies;
A ready wit to the pleader, patience to the parliament;
Let the Church think gravely, let her be long-suffering;
Let her continue in hope, and still go forward, there is no end yet;
To-morrow the day will break. To-morrow is eternity. To-morrow the Lord cometh.
To-day we labour, but rest is at hand, we shall soon lie down deeply.
All the joy is of battle, that is the gate of inspiration.
Death is not freely given, we must win immortality.
We must buy our delight, we must bear our toil patiently;
A little of the present will purchase an eternity of future;
Let the workman go to his task cheerfully, and return in the evening;
Let the smith labour in his forge, let the anvils ring out merrily;
Let the furnaces roar and the steam overhead, let the wheels go round;
Let the carpenter, in neat white apron, stand ready with his instruments;
Give him the plane and the square, let him deal in joints and fixtures;
Let the mason ascend the high roof, let him pile the freestone and granite;

Let him chisel the outward feature to appearance, let him rear monuments ;
And let the humble tiller of the soil delight in his craft also;
Let him plough faithfully, drawing the deep furrow up and down the headland ;
Let him sow in hope, and call Providence down ; let the womb of the earth conceive freely for him ;
Let the Spring heighten his fancy, let him be rich with expectation ;
And let the yellow Autumn load him with joy greater than all words ;
Here, in the orchard of life, I will blossom and fall, I will bear my fruit in bunches,
I will scatter my seed in the earth, I will leave my world behind me.

IX

O my beloved ! You look strangely at me to-night, you are very still and silent.
Many times I called out to you, but you did not answer me.
Your heart is heavy, and mine also ; feebly the day dies down, the shade arises,
The breath of earth streams with it, slowly the cloud stoops, the air perishes ;
The hills are hid with vapour, the stars come out overhead, nature's eye is shut.
The old pheasant roosts in the tree, I can see him plainly over the pool ;
The blackbird sleeps in the bush, the bats circle and wheel, the cattle lie down ;
The river winds in its course, too full for song ; everywhere silence ;
Dead, living silence ; dull, dreamless silence ; soul-shattering silence ;
Better the roaring tempest, scattering the fresh raindrops with it,

The bitter breath of the North, the piercing East, or the West victorious,
Than this eternal vacancy of sound, this crystal nothing, body-breaking silence.
I have watched the leaves wither and fade, yellow and pale on the edges,
I have seen the red beech fall, the green ash widowed,
The old elms scattering their souls in clouds, the willows and maples,
The young hazels sicken and droop, the berries on the briar ripen,
I have daily plucked the sweet blackberries, I have nursed them to maturity,
Before the nipping hoarfrost touched them with his finger, and blew his breath over them;
I have watched the old sun stoop lower and lower, and the moon come up higher and higher above me;
I have seen the corn gathered and the thresher come forth, I have seen the earth ploughed up;
I have seen the seed scattered and the rain falling in torrents, I have seen the sky come down;
I have seen legions of birds hovering over the bare brown fields, and the night lengthening;
Everywhere the lesson of death—death, tearful and apprehensive; death, living and triumphant,
And in my soul the clear testament of death, the strong calm, the silence and stillness of it,
The bird of thought flown, imagination fettered, reason distracted,
Death in my fingers, the cold slowly creeping up, slowly enveloping;
Then I climbed quickly up to you, I clasped you in my arms, I covered you with embraces;
I laid my cheek against yours, I cried loudly for deliverance;
I woke from my slumber, I stirred up the pool of thought, I roused you up also;

I shouted at the top of my voice, I drove away silence,
I loosed death from my fingers,
I would not bear his embraces, I shook him off mightily;
I read in the lesson of death the moral of life returning;
Everywhere hope; in the brown fields, in the dry leaves scattered beneath my feet,
Light in darkness, day hid in night, strength in weakness;
And in my soul again, like a river welling eternally,
The endless living flood of life, life, life;
The joy of life, the beauty of breathing, the delirium of existence;
The sum of all thought, and the execution of it, dear, living, immortal life.

X

O Art! O Knowledge! the world's tutor, ancient and scientific;
The universal tree, full of strange fruits, and learned exhibitions,
Ofttimes bitter to the taste, not always sure, and very insufficient;
You have solved many mysteries; you have revealed secrets long hid; you have shattered idols;
You have reared up cities from the dust, and drawn the maps of empires;
You have carved and chiselled Time, you have counted stars and planets;
You have greatly fathered Thought, you have fed Imagination;
You have made Learning rich, you have divested Ignorance;
You have shattered disputation, you have torn the web of argument;
You have enriched Wisdom, you have strengthened Opinion;

You have encouraged hope in some things, and destroyed it in others ;
You have determined causes, you have proved the birth of issues ;
You have removed boundaries, and swept away demarcations ;
You have drawn the Past's picture, you have brought Antiquity down to us ;
You have winnowed reigns and periods, you have deciphered monuments ;
You have interpreted tongues and signs, you have harvested the fruits of labour ;
You have immortalized diligence, and perpetuated utility ;
You have taught the doctrine of deliverance, you have worshipped truth and sanity ;
But you have reared other idols, you have your shrines and sanctuaries ;
You have your letters and creeds, you are very dogmatical ;
Though you teach subjection, you are not humility ;
You are a rich servant but a poor master ;
Though full of certitude yourself, you fill others with illusion ;
You are so full of substance, you cannot see the shadow ;
So clamorous for the end, you are lost to the beginning ;
In your haste to convince others, you fall a victim to yourself ;
Often teaching the remedy of light, you are a prey to blindness.
O the ignorance of knowledge, the vacancy of thought, the folly of wisdom !
What are the riches and reward of learning, the pomps and vanities ?
There is no learning greater than what teaches me of myself ;
And little of high value that will not better humanity.
My reckoning is not with the body, I relegate that duty to others ;

I am not the doctor of my kind, there are many physicians.
Whether I be fat or lean, I am still very like and similar;
That is but wasted effort which is spent on a flower ephemeral,
That the first frost of death will fade and wither in a moment.
There is more sweetness in adversity than in all the petals of Fortune;
And more rapture of defeat, than in all the triumphs of victory.
Give them the whip and the spur, that is the balm and the remedy.
Let not Comfort creep in like a thief, it will spoil sincerity.
I must prick my body for blood, and my soul for a sweetness.
While my body is at rest it knows nothing of adventure;
And the soul that slumbers is eternally dead to itself.
I will follow the index of knowledge but unto reconciliation.
That is the goal of my life, to covet hereafter,
And from the nothing I have been to greatly establish myself;
Counting all outward ornament but a hindrance to my happiness;
The God of Nature my hope, knowledge my faculty,
Poorness my wealth, sickness my safety, death my deliverance.

XI

O if I could lift humanity up, if I could teach them happiness!
If I could persuade them to a hope, or speak strong comfort to them!
If I could dispel the cloud, if I could induce brightness!

If I could improve opinion, and instruct sympathy!
If I could engender love, and compact friendships!
Draw all the earth into one bond, all difference of peoples!
If I could heal all ruptures and wounds, all pains and sufferings;
Pour out the balm of kindness, put an end to bitterness!
Or even stretch out an arm, and draw them gently to myself!
If I were not so feeble, if my breath had utterance,
And they, on their part, would drink at the well of disposition;
I would wipe away all tears, I would wrap them with sunshine;
I would strew flowers in their way, I would give them offerings of roses;
I would make the pure delicious lilies bloom everlasting around them;
I would blot out all difference, I would pillory distinction;
I would put down pride, I would make them sing songs and choruses;
I would lead them through the green walks of life, under trees and arbours;
They should draw the breath of Nature, they should pace beside streams and waters,
Down the long slopes of hills, yellow with corn, into deep valleys;
They should know the sweetness of woods, they should pitch their tents in orchards;
They should see the dear primrose bloom, and the shaded violet;
They should hear the woods ring, and see the fond cattle lying down;
They should wander out under the stars, mute with adoration,
With perfect love in their hearts, strongly knit in affection.

There should be no more wars, wives should cherish husbands,
Mothers rejoice in their sons, maidens fear not for lovers.
The old vows should be breathed, pledges given and accepted,
The crowning happiness of life, the marriages and bridals.
Labour should be reprieved, I would pacify contention;
I would grant freedom to all, the character of fraternity.
Let us give thanks to the present, let us bless opportunity.
Let us live largely to-day. Now the heart beats, now the blood runs wildly.
To-morrow the stream is silent, the flood is out, the wind blows drear'ly,
Time will prove all prophecy; he will bear my word witness;
I look forward bravely, I cherish my hope, I favour fulfilment.

XII

O my beloved! let us pour out our souls once more finally together.
Down with your branches and leaves, down with your lights and shadows,
Stoop low to the earth, this is where I am, bend down over me;
Cover me with your mantle, rock me in your arms, sing me to slumber;
Tell me some story of the past, crown me with hope of the future;
But O let us lovingly rejoice in the present, let us live together;
Let us drink up pleasure, and woo further delight; let us compel happiness;
All day I am broken and bruised, I am very sad and sorrowful.

I have borne the whip and the lash, I am deeply tormented.
I have heard the coward's tongue crying out, thick with reproaches.
I have felt the sting of shame, I have groaned inwardly to myself.
I have hoped against hope; I have walked in glooms and shadows.
I have seen right worsted, wrong many times triumphant.
I have seen the weak oppressed, I have seen cowards stand by poorly.
I have caught the breath of liars, I have heard the mouths of hypocrites.
I have seen the round tear fall, I have read despair writ in faces.
I have seen the fool prosper and pride hoisted up, merit unrewarded.
I know the hollow mockery of power, that unworthy idol.
I have heard the cry go up, my own was always ready to be with it;
Still I stifled it down, I shut it up in my heart firmly;
I sealed the door of my lips, I nursed my grief bravely;
I bore all reproaches, I made peace with complaint, I suffered humiliation.
O cravens and cowards! O blind fools and hypocrites!
You yourselves bear the lash, you are the diseased sufferers,
You are the strong traducers, the pullers down of principals;
The blind barriers to merit, the misinterpreters of government,
The poor perverters of justice, the vile administrators.
I envy no man his wealth, I will not wax rich with flattery.
As for your popular favours, I turn my face contemptuously from them;
I give them back their speeches and emoluments, I am not a beggar.

I could give them more than they have, though I possess nothing,
And still be content with my portion, so fruitful is my poverty.
I am happy with a cottage or without one ; the earth is my dwelling.
I can walk bare-headed, and bare-footed, and divest myself,
But I would not raise an arm to my parent, this spot of earth, this mother of me,
Nor let my voice be heard in one contumely against her,
Who lovingly brought me forth and carried me in her bosom,
And will one day open her bosom again tenderly to receive me.
Whatever her follies, I forgive them. She has very often wept for me,
She has suffered blood for my sake, she has battled with the enemy ;
She has been pierced with wounds, and several times brought near to death ;
When the foe tormented she kept him out bravely ;
Many of her sons, and my brothers, gave themselves up nobly in the breach ;
She deprived the lips of others to give food for my safety,
And received their deaths calmly for my sake, and others yet to come,
Storing the fruits of her kindness up for me and for many,
And I will not be unnatural in my loving regard for her,
Nor in the greatness of my soul hear one thing spoken unworthily,
Who has been so merciful to us all, and so motherly ;
I will not be guilty of so great a fault, I should think myself twice worthy of hell ;
I will die in my poverty, blessing it and blessing her, I will live for my country.

XIII

This is the date of my song; this is my testament.
In it I have drawn my picture, I have taken note of myself,
I have looked in my own glass, I have studied the book of passions,
I have read states and feelings, I have threshed thought indoors and out,
I have seen myself inwardly, and I have observed at a distance,
And compared myself with others both in and out of season.
I have my follies and foibles, my flesh and blood weaknesses;
I am not the model of my kind, the father of humanity.
I am one with all purpose, I stand ready for improvements,
I am no slave to custom, no deprecator of expedient.
Though I am fanciful, yet I am not a dreamer;
I see the reality of truth through the thin shadow of fiction.
I am the apostle of hope, I am the proof of destiny,
I am the finger of faith, the prophet of deliverance,
The strong prison of pride, the death of hypocrisy,
The scorner of artifice, the bold wrecker of convention.
All life has its recompense, I am not unrewarded;
I am full of strong rumour, I am great with futurity.

ODE TO MORNING

Welcome to morning. Now the shadows break.
Living is nature. The first songs arise.
The resurrected East is full awake,
And stealthy Dawn looks forth into the skies;
And o'er the murmuring rills,
And deeply slumbering hills,
The Spirit of the Earth breathes rapturous energies.

Awake, my soul! Awake from utter sleep,
Death's poor beginning, the encumbering dream;
Soar from the Stygian bed, the crowded deep,
The brooding waters of the Plutonian stream;
Shake off the body's care,
And through the crystal air,
Leap up to catch the Sun's ascending beam.

O, not on purple pillows would we lie,
Or comfortable beds, thick with perfume,
Or beauty-breathing banks, beneath a sky
For ever tranquil, knowing nought of gloom;
Or where young Spring begets
Eternal violets,
Sighing our forces out midst never-ending bloom.

Rather, while mortals suck the sickening sweets
Of enervating bliss, and comfort drawn
From cloying pleasures, tasting precious meats,
And weakening robust health on beds of lawn,
Seek we the glorious spoils
Of everlasting toils,
And shout our exultations to the dawn.

O living ecstasy! O speechless might!
Joy inexpressible! My soul's dear boon!
Nature's own blessing! My supreme delight!
Late in thy birth and coming, dying too soon!
Loud I lift up my voice,
And bid the earth rejoice,
Nature's responsive still, though man be out of tune.

Look down into the east. How the day stirs!
Tremblingly visible on the low-backed hills
The light arises. Sable Night's wing whirrs
Far to the west. A growing brightness fills
The vast receiving space,
And Morning's maiden face
Is tinged with roses and with daffodils.

Now vivider the light. The rose dies down
Or melts, transfused into a clearer beam,
And the pure ore arises, like a crown
On the World-Emperor's head, a glorious dream;
And over-thwart the skies
The gold-winged angel flies,
Fluttering his mantle over vale and stream.

Bewildering beauty! Lessons that must teach
To human frailty the Eternal's powers.
Thought more than language, greater than all speech;
Now, climbing up the heaven, the day-star showers,
Down from his reeling height,
Soft streams of radiant light
On scattered roofs of leaves and gathered souls of flowers.

And lo! out of the bosom of the earth,
Where he lay fondly nestling, now upsprings
The soaring skylark, this his second birth.
How feelingly he talks! How loud he sings!
Heaven seems to know the sound,
And sheds a lustre round,
And rapturous Joy leaps down on his ethereal wings.

Now turn thine eye to southward and behold
The view magnificent, the space that fills
The intervening valley. White mist, rolled
In one continuous cloud, melts and distils,
Or like a phantom creeps
Along the winding deeps
Seeking a passage out between the hills.

And high above them all, sedate, and crowned
With that old monument, grave and austere—
The warden of the Vale, the battle ground
Of long-forgotten days, eternal here—
Half dreaming in the sun,
Bare, stately Liddington
Throws his still summit upwards plain and clear.

And thou, Fitzwarren! lying close among
Thy wooded terraces of beech and firs,
Thou, too, shalt be remembered in my song.
How peaceful are thy days! What passion stirs
The heart within thy breast?
Thy smoothly-slumbering rest
Has scarce been broken in a thousand years;

Save when autumnal tempests, howling bare
Through thy warped foliage, scatter wide around
The everlasting leaves, and volleying air
Rocks the tall belfry rooted in the ground;
Or when an old elm falls
Beneath thy slumbering walls,
And the low woods re-echo with the sound.

Now to the east again. Sevenhampton sleeps
Crowded in shadows yet. The dusky glooms
Stretch forth amazing, till the sunlight creeps,
Flooding the hollow vale with sprays and blooms
Of full, voluptuous light,
And floating seas of white
Gleam with the splendour of Egyptian tombs.

This is the home of Peace. Here Quiet loves
To dwell with Beauty undisturbed, to be
At rest for ever. Blessed be thy groves,
Thy wooded walks, thy old rusticity!
Long may I find a place,
Far from the reeling race,
To hold sweet converse with the heart of thee.

And for thy elm-wood majesty, who knows
Sublimer patterns than these old brocades
Of Nature's masterpiece? These giant boughs,
These over-arching roofs, these greenwood glades,
These churches without pews,
Cathedral avenues,
These sanctifying glooms and purifying shades?

Whether at morning best, or sultry noon,
Or dim, delicious evening, grave or gay,
Or stripped December, or delirious June.
Naked or shrouded lovelier, who shall say?
Both in the summer bloom,
And winter's transient gloom,
Your monumental spires will glorify the day.

Now wonderful the meadows, calm, and still,
And meditative yet, wrapt in the hues
Of morning's rarest fancy, pure, until
The vivifying beams new wealth infuse
Of intellectual light,
O'er-dimming Fancy's sight,
And heavenly heat sucks up the quivering dews.

But stay, impetuous one! Whither so fast?
Here ponder by the stream that rolls along
Its full voluptuous torrent. Let us cast
A thought to wood-ward, loitering here among
Earth's faintliest-uttered balms,
And consecrated calms
Now fitly shattered with the bolts of song.

O secret wood! I know thy treasury,
Thy full, embracing trees, the breath that flows
Through thy dim cloisters, weaving mystery,
The open spaces, whither Flora strows
Her intermingled sweets,
Thy shelters and retreats,
The friendly company of thy leaves and boughs.

Yet, at this living hour, more dear thou seem'st
To my affected fancy, and I feel
More animate with thee. Thither, as thou dream'st
In thy compacted slumbers, would I steal
Out of myself to be
Lost in the soul of thee,
More beauty to confess or greater to conceal.

Thus wears the morn away. The heavenly sun
Looks to the south full-faced, and o'er the plain
Ruffles his mantling beams. The veil is gone
That dimmed the silver field. The shadows wane
To a contracted span
No bigger than a man,
And earth grows warm and riotous again.

Short as the period seems, yet briefer still
My mortal brightness, passing soon away
To shores unthinkable. O let me fulfil
Life's fitful enterprise whilst here I may!
Still labouring to compare
Joys more divinely fair,
And wait the opening of a mightier day.

THE RIVER COLE IN FLOOD

See how the tributary Cole, that flows
The summer through, mid narrow, flowery banks,
To whose impulsive stream the mill-wheel clanks,
Shaded and sweetened by the clustering rose,
Now swollen with December rains and snows,
Marshalling in bold array his watery ranks,
Swills through the willows, playing merry pranks
See how the silver-crested torrent goes !
So that where late we stood below the hatch,
Plucking the crimson berries from the tree,
Where ripening grasses waved above the knee,
With reed, and drifting bough, and floating thatch,
The river shows in many a shining patch,
And after, widens like an inland sea.

THE COTTAGER'S EVENING

SWEET, simple poverty! How I love to see
The humble labourer's poor and homely fare,
The rustic fireside's cheerful, ruddy glare,
The blazing log, sawn from the woodland tree,
The singing kettle, spouting furiously,
The husbandman's return, the good-wife's care,
The golden-tinted loaf, the steaming ware,
The infant, perched upon the father's knee!
To see them sitting at the frugal board,
And hear the chosen compliment addrest,
The general happiness so well exprest,
The fond endearment and the loving word;
Parents and children mutually adored,
And after, peaceful slumber's balmy rest!

THE THRUSHES

Can it be, so cold and early,
In the cheerless April dawn,
There are fledglings in the laurels,
Stooping o'er the grassy lawn?

Else, why should the speckled thrushes
Once so musical and rare,
Hold their song in fearful silence,
Watching, watching, everywhere.

Ah! I'll see. So, softly, gently,
Dropping on the mossy ground,
Underneath the bushy laurels,
In I creep and look around.

Sweet, O sweet! directly sitting
On the branch above my head
Is the troop of baby thrushes,
But the parent bird is fled.

Dears, why do ye cheep and twitter,
With your mouths wide open so?
Darlings, I am not your mother,
I am far too rough, you know.

O you pert and saucy creatures,
Leaders of the summer band!
I must take you, one or other,
Hold and press you with my hand!

Do ye fly me? Little tyrants!
Softly dears, my birdies, stay!
I *will* take you. Do not tempt me.
See! ye cannot fly away.

There, at last! Nay! do not struggle.
How its tiny heart *does* beat!
Lovely little speckled creature!
Could I harm a thing so sweet?

Now the mother, sorely troubled,
Flutters in the spreading bough
With a piercing note of sorrow,
Back and forward, to and fro.

Ah! fear not in thy affection,
Soon thy darling I'll restore,
When I've pressed it to my bosom,
I would soothe it, nothing more.

There! and there! are love and kisses
Softer than the breath could speak.
See! it shuts its little eyes up,
Nestling close against my cheek.

Gently now the bonds are loosened,
And the little babe is free;
Lightly! lightly! little stranger,
Hop into the laurel tree.

Learn the lesson of thy parent,
Full, melodious, sweet and strong,
That in summer I may listen
Nightly to thy echoing song.

Cheep! cheep! cheep! Away it flutters,
Gaunt, long-legged, lank and drawn,
Rakishly into the laurels
Spreading out above the lawn.

THE LITTLE CELANDINE

When February frosts are over,
And the March suns coldly shine,
Golden in the woods and meadows
Blooms the little celandine.

Spare at first, and starred and dotted,
Shivering in the cutting breeze,
Green and yellow in the orchards,
Nestling underneath the trees,

Like a bidden guest, new-coming
From a warm and temperate clime,
Entering in the cheerless portal
Ere the appointed festal time.

Soon, when sunny April lightens,
Kindling with its milky showers
Souls of buds, and leaves and blossoms,
Scattering countless crowns of flowers;

Then, along the banks and meadows,
O how beauteous to behold
All the earth, in matchless splendour,
Gleaming with its glossy gold!

So the happy children gather
In the joyous woods and lanes,
Weaving buttercups and daisies
Into endless wreaths and chains;

Sitting underneath the hedgerows
Thus they mingle and combine,
Full of merry childish prattle,
With the pretty celandine.

O how sweet in after ages,
Did their infant hearts but know,
It will be but to remember
Childhood hours of long ago!

Thus I wandered, free and happy,
In the meadows past and old,
With the troop of merry children,
Weaving flowers of brightest gold.

Now the dear ones are departed,
Hopes and hours together sped,
Some have lived and proved unfaithful,
Some are low among the dead;

Yet each springtime I remember,
With a joy almost divine,
When I see the starlike blossoms
Of the golden celandine.

THE VALLEY OF WHITE HORSE

Some sing of costly treasure ships, the hoarded gold of gain,
The azure vaults of Italy, the spicy shores of Spain,
Of cinnamon and citron, purple mountains of the vine,
But none can tell a sweeter song than this dear vale of mine.

The rolling Danube and the Rhine are pleasant themes to me,
The golden Tiber and the Nile disgorging to the sea,
The Tagus and the Amazon may stretch a wider course,
But loveliest of all valleys is the Valley of White Horse.

From where the rising Cotswolds rear their gentle-sloping crowns,
To where high-hearted Liddington o'ertops the rolling downs,
O give me leave to wander still, I hold the world to scorn
In the valley of my childhood, in the land where I was born.

There's Faringdon, and Folly Hill, and Stanford-in-the-Vale,
And Uffington, and Inglesham, and Highworth hoar and hale,
And many a pleasant-seated grove, and ancient old retreat,
The humble dwelling of the poor, the palace of the great.

True, no tremendous torrent roars through hollow, cleft ravine,
Or cloudy mountain-pillar over-tops the rising scene,
But there are terraces and slopes, and woody walls and bowers,
And gentle winding rivulets through purple banks of flowers.

Here burn the scented clover tops, and there the lily blows,
The crimson-hearted sorrel and the heavy-breathing rose,
As far as eye can penetrate, as long as sight can reach,
Behold! the glory of the elm, the acorn, and the beech.

Here, sitting on the high hill-side, I feel the breezes blow
A wave of summer incense from the jewelled depths below,
And sweeter than the cooling breath that's winnowed from the sea
The gentle breathing of the vale comes floating up to me.

I see the morning sun arise, and watch the star go down,
And though my soul's to sorrow now, it hopes to hold the crown;
I crave no other recompense, no other honour hail,
But first to walk upon the hill and slumber in the vale.

There's something whispers in mine ear—I would not reason why—
"As long as woods and valleys live, thou hast no need to die;"
And now I recognise the voice, and tell the accent clear—
The vocal Spirit of the Vale, the mover of the sphere.

Long may I walk beside the stream, and woo the solemn burn,
Here weave the pliant willow and there pluck the folded fern,
While slender-footed Isis draws his silver-fountained force,
And winds his growing torrent down the Valley of White Horse.

WINTER

O WINTER! loving and majestical,
Breathless, compassionate, mysterious,
Nature's reflection, the old earth's idleness,
Mother of glooms and shadows, free, tempestuous,
Raging and fearful, now brooding and solitary,
Now is thy time and season, thy throne and government.
Now the wind howls in the forest, the cloud hangs over the valley;
The sun creeps along the hill early into rest;
The round moon comes up over the dale; the stars glimmer and set;
The stream rushes in its banks; the pool stands still in the meadow;
The brown earth ponders; the woods mourn musically;
The swain draws the late furrow; the sheep nibble their pasture;
The yearlings crowd in the stall; the bared oak quivers;
The green ivy blooms in tresses around the trunk;
The chattering rooks dig among the leaves for acorns;
The thrush is mute in the bush; the blackbird sits still on the bank;
The redbreast pipes cheerily; the pheasant hold his perch in the tree;
Now the ice is over the pool; the frost glitters on the window;
Suddenly the night comes down; the evening bell arises;
The fire crackles on the hearth; the log emits an odour;
The children's faces beam with delight, watching the flames go up;
The good-wife sets the table, hailing her spouse from labour,
The crisp brown loaf, golden butter from the dairy,
The hot and steaming cup, cheerful and delicious,
And the strong dish of welcome, sure domestic comfort;

These are thy offerings, thy dear compensations,
In which my universal mind delights,
As one in reason and temperament.
Soon Spring will weave her living, gay illusion,
And from her treasury move gowns and garlands,
And lap the hills with luxury, soft, effeminate.
Long may I walk the fields and terraces
Fresh with the crisping frost salubrious,
While the wind beats, in secret contemplation;
Wearing a heart as strong against misfortune
As the clear, cutting breath that smites my forehead!

THE RE-AWAKENING

How sweet! when storm-racked Winter flies,
And Spring comes in with melting skies,
When Earth's green carpet's newly spread,
And Heaven is genial overhead,
How sweet! when woods and valleys ring
With echoes of returning Spring,
When liquid song the azure fills,
And sunshine wraps the southern hills,
To leave the busy school of care,
And wander in the rapturous air,
Where the high elms their shadows pass
Like ghostly phantoms on the grass,
When softly-murmuring breezes bring
Summer's warm balm upon their wing!
O then my earth-born fetter breaks,
Then my slow-slumbering soul awakes,
Living, from Sorrow's bed I rise
And drink the medicine of the skies;
From my sequestered sickness run
And revel in the healing sun.
So as, one winter past and gone,
Another Spring comes trembling on,
With each revolving year that flies
My inward spirit lives and dies;
Dies with the chill, retrenchant blast,
And kindles when the storm is past.

THE FOREST OAK

What's Arthur, Lancelot,
Hecuba, or Helen,
To my forest oak?
Who sings of woody Ida,
Lofty Ida?
Of Ida, dewy-dark,
Ida, many-fountained,
Praising her piny timbers
Above my forest oak?

Did not dread Paris,
Seeking fair Lacaena,
Sail in ship of Ida,
Drawing deaths and sorrows
On his parent city?
When the axe on Ida,
Wielded by the shepherd,
Shivered in the sunlight,
And the sounding echoes,
Rolling down the gorges
Woke the timid maidens
From their noonday slumbers,
Was there any blessing
On that wood of Ida?

Why then sing of Ida
O'er my forest oak,
With his iron branches,
With his strength of ages,
With his towered greatness,

Standing like a giant
Grim into the battle,
High above his comrades;
With his trunk, moss-covered,
Old and weather-beaten,
Scars of many winters
On his wrinkled forehead;
Old and weather-beaten,
Young and in his triumph,
All around his acorns
Growing into saplings,
Strength of mighty parent?

At his iron timbers
Many seas have shuddered,
Many hearts have broken.
When the booming cannon,
Hurling horrid thunders,
Battered on his bulwarks,
And the shots and splinters
Shrieked and fell around him,
Firm against the battle,
Forward in the firing,
Blackened with the burning,
Heedless of all dangers
Sailed my forest oak.

All the earth has known him,
Earth and every ocean,
Winds and western breezes
Fly and fall before him.
Fled him, too, the Spaniard,
Frightened with his firmness,
Saw and wondered at him
Egypt and Egyptian.

Honour be to Ida
For her piny timbers,
And the waving ilex
Of the far Etruscan !
But not woody Ida,
Nor the far Etruscan,
Nor the towered summits
Of the Alps or Indies
Yield so rich a burden,
Strong and iron-hearted
As the stately pillar
Of my forest oak.

AFTER THE RAIN

After the rain,
New joy and beauty bringing,
How sweet! to wander forth again
Where the loud thrush, singing, singing,
Pours forth his soul with still-increasing pain,
In one full-hearted, loud, melodious strain,
After the rain!

After the rain,
In the still evening, when the shadows thicken,
And silence falls again,
Where the warm winds quicken, quicken,
With their sweet and odorous breath
Every bud, and leaf and blossom,
Drooping on the earth beneath,
While the soul to joy is fain,
Conquering every care and pain,
Let us wander forth again,
After the rain!

After the rain,
The hills show brighter, their green slopes,
Washed with the essence, purer, clearer,
Are lovelier, sweeter, plainer, nearer,
Life stirs within us, and our hopes
Kindling in the heart and brain,
Forthwith a rosier colouring assume,
Earth is studded o'er with bloom,
Young we grow, we know not how,
Banished every toil and pain,
As we see the red sun dipping,
O'er the meadows tripping, tripping,
After the rain.

I CARE NOT FOR YOUR POLITICS

I CARE not for your politics,
The strife of state-craft, working ill,
The bounds unequal factions fix,
The burden of the people's will;
The raving of the master mind
With danger of the age and hour,
And pelting politicians, blind
To all but their access to power.

I care not for your killing scorn,
Your idle shows of wordy wars,
As empty as the winds at morn
That rage across the harbour-bars;
Your plots and counterplots to check
A certain harm or known abuse
With greater evil, framed to wreck
The engines your opponents use.

Reports of High Commissioners
On age-worn systems, fusty rules,
Defendants and petitioners,
And lawyers wrangling o'er their stools;
Hair-splitting points of difference
On minor matters, nameless laws,
And fooling hours of reference
In confirmation of the cause.

Leave the old World to do her will;
Let Justice stand and Treason fall;
God, looking from His holy hill
Hath wrought a heritage for all;
Hath weaved a threaded destiny
Since age-long Time his round began,
And breathed an inner harmony
Through all the chequered life of man.

ON BEING BITTEN BY A DOG

UNGRATEFUL wretch! that would'st requite
A friendly deed with savage bite,
Acknowledging thy master's good
With pointed teeth and ready blood;
Get thy vile body back to ground,
Thou treacherous, good for nothing hound.

Is it for this that thou dost live,
To torture them that come to give?
Be sure, if I had come a foe,
Thou'd'st kept thy craven body low;
Thou'd'st let me slip without a sound,
Thou crazy, curst, contentious hound.

What evil have I done to thee,
To wreak thy vengeance out on me?
Now in my joints I halt and limp,
Stung with thy pain, thou noxious imp!
Thy teeth have made a bloody wound,
Thou snarling, base, rebellious hound.

Last night, when burglars, far and near,
Struck every heart with sudden fear,
Deep in thy fusty, stinking sty,
Thou slumbered'st with a heavy eye;
While prowling thieves robbed close around,
Thou greedy, yelling, useless hound.

The farmyard cock, that chants so free,
Is far to be preferred to thee,
For at the first faint sound at night
He up and crows with all his might,
And wakes the neighbours with a bound,
Thou lazy, sneaking, snakish hound.

Thus is it always while we live,
  We're never thanked for what we give;
The good must suffer and the wise,
  The fool alone enjoys the prize;
Envy will strike you down to ground
Most like this vicious, snarling hound.

TWO WOUNDS

Last night, as I my steps did wend,
  To pay a visit to a friend,
A vicious cur, with wretched spite,
  Flew at my knee with savage bite;
Flesh-deep his teeth met with the bound.
And left behind a poisonous wound.

To-day, my letters are returned,
  Contemned, despised, disdained and spurned,
Which I most faithfully did write
  Unto a certain worthy knight,
Causing a deeper, deadlier wound
Than that inflicted by the hound.

Wherefore, I try my friends no more,
  But shun their dark and dangerous door;
Hence to my enemies I turn,
  Whether they will my kindness spurn.
Our friends, it seems, are rare and few:
Only our enemies are true.

ON A LOST FRIEND

And thou art dead!
Closed be thy door!
Thy page is read,
Thy task is o'er;
Across the sky
The crescent bark
Of day passed by
To after-dark.

No more the thrush
To rapture grows,
A death-like hush
Is on the rose;
One dewy tear,
One sigh, one moan,
One grief to bear,
The world alone.

No merry peals
Ring in the lane;
Now silence steals,
Steals on the brain;
A sense of fate,
Of wrath to come,
Of fears too late,
And musings dumb.

The finger-tips
Of Him that gave
Pressed firm thy lips;
And o'er the wave
As shoots a beam,
Forth from thy breast
Thy dying dream
Winged in the west.

And on thine eyes
A dimness came,
As evening skies
Are flushed with flame
So sunset burned
Upon thy sight,
And swiftly turned
To low-browed night.

The mother mourns
Beside the cot,
The infant turns
And knows thee not;
Upon the grass,
With noiseless tread,
The neighbours pass,
And name thee dead.

But thou had'st neared
Thy span of time,
And long had'st heard,
The evening chime;
The shadows fell
Aslant thy way,
On wood and dell,
At hush of day.

Low in the West
The late beam shone,
Slow heaved thy breast
With memories gone;
The waning tide
Ebbed on the shore,
And outward plied
To turn no more.

* * *

Weave him no flower,
  Save such as grew
At twilight hour
  Dim in the dew;
Leaves red and brown
  Upon a cross,
Or careless crown
  Of scented moss.

Nor o'er his grave
  Expend a tomb,
Nor marbles have
  To show his doom;
The simple earth
  Above his breast
Will tell his birth
  And fortune best.

Nor do you weep
  That he is gone.
Lo! as we sleep
  The hour steals on;
A breath, a space,
  A day, no more!
So soon the race
  Of Life is o'er.

Here we have met,
  We know not why;
Suns rise and set,
  And moons wane by;
Awhile we feed
  A tiny flame,
And dying speed
  To whence we came.

THE IMMORTAL

Why such repining?
Life's but the portal
Of the immortal.
All our divining,
Sorrow and trouble,
Laughing and weeping,
Waking and sleeping,
Burst not the bubble.
Life's but the portal
Of the immortal.

Love, truly given,
Perfectly blended,
Can it be ended?
Higher than heaven
The wisdom that thought it;
Majestic, supernal,
And endless, eternal,
The power that wrought it.
God is a spirit,
And love is the portal
That opes to immortal;
Who lives may inherit.

Why such repining?
Sorrows are pleasures,
And losses are treasures,
Restoring, refining.
This life is a fetter,
We wear it a season,
With folly or reason,
For worse or for better;
But soon at the portal,
To chide or to cherish,
We falter and perish,
Or blossom immortal.

OLD HARMONIES

O GOLD of Rome, and gold of Greece,
  Twin home of music, passion-wrung,
Whose minstrels, born to war or peace,
  Untiring tuned their souls to song!
What bosom hath not leapt that heeds
The sounding of your strings and reeds?

What spirit will not swift confess—
  If it have love of soulful sound—
To greater joy and happiness,
  And beauty hitherto unfound;
To glidings smoother than all streams,
And sweetness sweeter than all dreams.

And ye can kindle pity too,
  And call the torrents of hot tears,
And pierce our inmost senses through
  With harrowing cruelties of years;
And thrill us to eternal pain,
And make our blood run back again.

Sing on, old Rome! and echo, Greece!
  Though your famed minstrels be no more,
Sooner shall that wild torrent cease
  That circles twice the daily shore
Than echoes of your strings shall die.
Heaven vibrates with your harmony.

THE FORGERS

"Come, you fellows, make all ready;
William, stop your fooling there!
Swing the crane and raise the pulley,
There's no further time to spare.

"Wait, and try the keys a minute,
See that all is safe and sound,
For we'll give the roof a shaking,
And we'll raise the dust around.

"Bring the gauges and the trimmer,
Bring the besom and the bar,
Put the damper down a little,
See! our fire gleams like a star.

"You, there, oil the slides and piston,
Make your hammer bound and leap;
Come and help me with the porter,
Don't stand gaping like a sheep.

"See what pressure's in the boiler,
Keep the tackle strong and tight,
And your eye upon the metal,
We must finish this to-night;

"There's another job to-morrow,
When this forging will be done,
Special for the newest engine,
Nineteen hundred ninety-one."

So the toilers, black and grimy,
Some with oath, and some with cheer,
Ran to get the tackle ready,
Trimmer there, and gauges here.

One stood waiting with the besom
To sweep off the sand and scale,
This one swung the crane and pulley,
That fetched water in the pail;

Others saw the keys were tightened
With the rammer's sounding blow,
This one oiled the shining piston,
That one brushed the dies below.

Up and down the hammer travelled,
Like a giant, gaunt and grim,
Snorting to attack the metal
Heating in the fire for him.

While the forger, stripped for battle,
Standing singly in his place,
Pulled the heavy jack-boots on him,
And the gauze before his face;

Showed the brawny wrist and muscle,
And the clear mechanic eye,
Gave the word, and shouted, "Ready,"
To his fellows waiting by.

"Raise the furnace door a little,
Arm the porter, man to man."
So they slipped the pulley on it,
And the mighty toil began.

Up the furnace door was lifted,
And the searching glare shot out,
Lighting up the dusky rafters,
And the alleys round about;

Shining on the workmen's faces
In the twilight ghastly pale,
As the joyful sun at noonday
Burns above the torrid vale.

Now the heated mass of metal,
Hoisted by the creaking crane,
Slowly leaves the smoking furnace
And the door descends again;

While a molten liquid torrent,
Running from the blazing ore,
Like a fiery, hissing serpent,
Writhes along the iron floor,

As the crane swings, and the pulley,
And the chain jolts to and fro,
Till the blinding mass is ready
For the grave and plastic blow.

"Ready now"? "Aye! all is ready."
And the blows begin to pour,
And the rushing sparks and splinters
Rain in torrents on the floor;

Like the stinging shots and pellets
On a soldier's coat of mail,
Or the sharp, skin-piercing volley
Flying in the bitter gale;

While the forger and his helpmates,
With a deft, mechanic skill,
Turn and shape the glowing metal
To the master's cunning will;

To and fro, and back and forward,
Sidewise, lengthwise, end to end,
Here, another inch of taper,
There, the radius and the bend;

Till the forgeman gives the signal,
In his eye a spark of pride,
And the hammer stops impulsive,
So the heavy blows subside.

Here the gauges and the trimmer,
All the sizes, one by one;
Cut away the useless porter,
There! the mighty task is done.

Now the merry whoop and laughter
As the hubbub dies away,
Come whatever will to-morrow
We have won the race to-day.

THE STORY OF ACESTES, ANCIENT KING OF SICILY

From "Aeneas in Sicily." (An early Poem.)

THEN told they how, when the sea-monster, sent
To ravage Troy, for pledges unfulfilled
By faithless Laomedon—punishment
Fitting the deed—his bloody journey held,
And came to Ilium on pillage bent,
And the unholy compact had been sealed,

Whereby a royal virgin, once a year,
Though innocent and guileless as a dove,
And beautiful, should from her parents dear
Be torn, and torn from her thrice happy love,
And thrown to the fell monster anywhere,
And to his ruthless jaws a victim prove;

Brave Crimisus, a princely son of Troy,
On whose fair daughter the foul lot did fall,
Rather than sacrifice his only joy
To such a bloody, bootless spectacle,
Thinking what artifice he might employ
To hinder and prevent the carnival;

By secret night, when the calm world did sleep,
And only Philomel piped in the vales,
Committed his fair daughter to the deep,
In a rude vessel, without oar or sails,
And called wise heaven a gentle course to keep,
And waft her westward with propitious gales.

Then blissful Jove, crowned in the topmost sky,
Pitying her sad condition, thither sent
Attendant nymphs, to pass the rude skiff by,
And hush the sounding waves; bewilderment
Seized all the passing winds, and they did fly,
And other-where their useless wars were spent.

So to the isle she came; but her fond sire,
Disconsolate, and weighed down with his grief,
And now o'erpowered with a strong desire
For his lost child, and finding no relief
From his unhappy loss, venting his ire
On his own woful head—himself the thief—

Besought from mighty Jove that he might know
What distant sea, desert, or dreary wild
Held his loved daughter, whither he might go,
And unattended seek the lonely child,
By hill and mountain, girt with frost and snow,
Or pleasant valleys, honey-sweet and mild.

Once more the mighty Parent did comply
With his request, and urged him through the main,
Stooping from his bright throne above the sky,
And smoothing with his breath the watery plain,
Till the grief-laden vessel stood fast by
The beach where late the gentle maid had lain.

But scarce had Crimisus attained the shore,
And called his much-lamented child by name,
What time the sun sank, and the evening wore
Toward the rising moon, and Hesper came
Flooding the vales with light, when down there bore
Great Jove himself, clad in a crimson flame,

And straight the faithful parent did transform
Into a river-god, with signs and powers
To quell the chafing stream and chiding storm,
And call the sunbeams forth upon the flowers
With his reed-music, and upon the warm
Banks of his loved stream pass the pleasant hours.

But he, forsooth, charmed with the neighbouring wood,
And burning for the nymphs that came to lave
Their lilied bodies in his crystal flood,
And cool their tired limbs in the evening wave,
With feverish passions—such as stir the blood
Of mortals to unlawful limits—gave

His changed mind over to the vain pursuit
Of pleasant love, forgetful of his state,
And chased the frightened nymphs with his shrill flute
And took them in the groves, and did there sate
His passions, leaving his mild waters mute
With fear, and wondering on their guardian's fate.

And thus at length, upon a summer's day,
His daughter, now more fair and lovely grown,
Flying the parchéd fields, did chance to stray
Into the haunting grove, and there, unknown,
Her lost sire ravished her, and held his way,
Nor knew the beauteous maiden was his own.

But she, conceiving, bore a lovely boy,
Whom the fond mother called, after her name,
Acestes, in remembrance of fair Troy,
Who, afterwards, by his good deeds, became
The ruler of that state, and did enjoy
More bliss than any monarch known to Fame.

THE CYCLOPS

From "Aeneas in Sicily." (An early Poem.)

Fearful and high the shaggy monsters stood,
Half-covered with a tawny lion's hide,
And armed with knotted pines from the deep wood,
Held with a leathern girdle to the side,
And clotted and deep-stained with human blood,
Whereon they gazed with dark and cruel pride.

Nothing of human likeness they possessed,
But everywhere mis-shapen and rough-made,
Uncertain to be counted man or beast,
Whether by mortals or immortals swayed,
So vast, that Phœbus wheeling to the West,
Half the broad island darkened with their shade.

Heavy their limbs as the well-timbered oak,
And rough and furrowed as the brown sea-sands
Left with the ebbing tide, and when they spoke,
They beat upon their sides with their huge hands
So that the hills resounded with the stroke,
And the loud echoes rolled to distant lands.

And fiercer still their countenance appeared,
Rugged and steep as is the dark cliff side,
All fringed and bristling with a horrid beard;
An only eye the brutes with sight supplied.
Bloody, and red, and chiefly to be feared,
Sunk in the middle of their foreheads wide.

Raw flesh and entrails they embraced for food,
If any wretched beast might hap that way,
But otherwise rough barks and herbs they chewed,
Crashing among the woods the livelong day ;
And most they joyed and revelled in black blood
Of bulls, and mortals, wrecked upon the bay.

And ever as the unwieldy monsters strode
Above the yellow beach, the high cliffs swayed
As they would fall beneath the cumbrous load,
Or, haply, if they wandered in the shade,
Pine trees and spreading oaks began to nod,
And the high hills trembled and were afraid.

Hard on the rugged shore, above the wave,
Midway adown the precipice's steep,
Yawned the black entrance to a horrid cave,
Wherein the hollow wind, as it did sweep,
Such mournful mutterings and wild whispers gave,
That it was sounded half across the deep;

And here, amid the shades, when angry Jove
Thundered along the hills, and the rude spray
Dashed wildly on the dreary heights above,
And the huge billows rolled about the bay,
With wretched and rude sports the monsters strove
To pass the dark and cheerless hours away.

As yet the island was untilled by man,
And none but savage beasts the uplands knew,
But everywhere, unchecked, the wild woods ran,
And everywhere woodbines and roses grew,
Lilies, and violets, and cowslips wan,
And hyacinths, and blowing bells of blue.

A thousand odours filled the balmy air,
And often as the wind, with gentle wings,
Ruffled the smooth-leaved oaks, and myrtles fair,
And softly blew where the dark ivy clings,
The souls of flowers were wafted everywhere,
Filling the wide heavens with their wanderings.

Here, all unnoticed, grew the bearded grain,
And here, uncultured, the rude-clustering vine
Clambered and ran by the far-spreading plain,
Long before Ceres or loved Proserpine
Learned to collect and count their golden gain,
Or Bacchus to press out the merry wine.

And here the murmuring bees their office plied,
Labouring to complete their summer store,
Searching the woods upon the far hillside,
And lightly flitting by the sunny shore,
Till the breeze freshened with the evening tide,
And fiery-footed Phœbus westward wore.

Then, upward from a thousand bursting throats,
Beneath the silver moon and starlight pale,
Like to a full-voiced melody, that floats
Softly along the borders of the gale,
Swelled the sweet-sounding numbers and sad notes
Of minstrels, sorrowing lost Philomel.

Heedless the savage boar hied in the wood,
And heedless the wild herds grazed on the plain,
Careless the raven reared her sooty brood,
And fearless flew the mild dove and the crane;
Before the island drank of human blood,
Or the deep waves had reddened in the main.

Later, when wrathful Jove, from his high place
Ruling the awful spheres, looked down and spied
* Apollo's son healing the human race,
And doting on the deed with foolish pride,
And,—all unwilling to o'erlook the case,—
Smote the unhappy youth so that he died ;

Apollo, kindled to a burning rage,
And blinded with the fierce and furious flame
That nothing could diminish nor assuage,
On the unhappy Cyclops fixed the blame,
And, armed with instruments of every age,
Down to the distant isle with thunders came.

And there the helpless brutes the young god slew,
All unperceived with his death-dealing darts,
And into Tartarus their bodies threw,
Wherein they lay, mangled, in many parts,
Their features of a deep and dreadful hue,
And blackened with the Wizard's wretched arts.

* Æsculapius.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HORACE

(1904)

BOOK II. ODE XVIII

No splendid ceiling, wrought with gold,
  Impanelled and inlaid with richest ivory,
And carved with figures, quaint and old,
  Glistens above and throws its splendour over me ;
No shining roof, with marbles crowned,
  The rich and priceless gifts of fair Hymettia,
Reclines on lofty pillars, found
  And cut amid the hills of farthest Africa ;
Neither have I, the unknown heir
  And client of the princely lord of Pergamos,
Received a palace for my share
  That I should sing the praise of royal Attalus ;
Neither do noble ladies spin—
  Labouring to beguile the artless hours away,
When my protection they would win—
  Me sumptuous purples brought from far Laconia :
But I am earnest and resigned,
  And gifted with the charm of pleasant poesy,
Wherefore, though poor, the rich will mind
  To visit me with smiles and royal courtesy.
I ask the gods for nothing more,
  Nor yet entreat my friend for more than he doth give,
Happy to count my little store,
  And happy in my little Sabine farm to live.
Behold ! one fleeting day is gone,
  Another is at hand and duly fills its place,
And every new moon hastens on,
  Eager to reach its end and finish in the race.
But you, though aged, and near to death,
  Command the mighty weights of marble to be laid,

Vexing the troubled earth beneath,
And heedless of how soon the mortal debt be paid,
New tenements and mansions raise,
And still thrust back the bounds of the hoarse-sounding sea
From Baiae, maddened with the craze
For wealth, not rich enough in your own boundary.
What! are you so insatiate grown
That you will tear the neighbouring landmark from the field,
And add the soil unto your own,
Covetous of the share your honest client held?
For shame! the husband and the wife
Are rudely thrust along and torn from their abodes,
The victims of a wretched strife,
Bearing their squalid young and old paternal gods.
Nothing more fixed and sure awaits
The coming of the rich and high and haughty lord
Than the dread mansion that the fates
And the rapacious Orcus furnish and afford.
Then wherefore covet greater things,
And s ive beyond your reach? The fair, impartial earth
Is open for the sons of kings
And equally for those that are of baser worth;
Neither could faithless Charon, bold
To pilot passing souls to gloomy Tartarus,
Be bribed with promises of gold
To carry back the wily lord Prometheus.
He it is who doth restrain
Proud Tantalus within his shadowy abodes,
And others of his race as vain,
Aspiring to be famed above the awful gods;
Or, summoned to relieve the poor—
Their labours now complete and filled with fleeting years—
Quickly he wafts them to his shore,
And if he be not called, he answers and appears.

BOOK III. ODE XXX

Behold! I have piled up a monument
More durable than brass, and loftier
Than the proud summits of the Pyramids,
That sephulchre the mighty kings of Egypt;
Which neither the destructive thunder-cloud,
Nor the wild northern blast, nor wingéd tempest,
Nor the unnumbered orders of the years,
Nor yet the endless, tireless flights of time
Will ever shift from its foundation.
I shall not wholly die, for much of me,
When churl Death summons, will not yield to him,
But ever shall I grow, with future praise,
Great with renown, and new distinction,
While the high pontiff, with the silent virgin,
Ascends the altar in the Capitol.
I shall be famed where the impetuous
And wrathful cataract of Aufidus roars,
And where the ancient Daunus—sometime lord
Of the wild nations of Apulia—
Sat ruling in his dry and parchéd plains.
Favoured at length, from poor pretensions grown,
This honour's due to me, that I am foremost
To blend the sweetness of the Æolian song
With the rich numbers of Italian verse.
Take, then, the duly honourable pride,
And the reward such merit clearly owes,
Melpomene; and O! kind flatterer,
Mistress and Muse of song, adorn my brow
With the victorious wreath of Delphic laurel.

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